



The Skolt Saami negative prefix *pann-*

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About me

- University teacher in Skolt Saami (University of Oulu) and doctoral researcher (University of Turku)
- Doctoral study: Verbal derivation in Skolt Saami (part of the project *Skolt Saami grammar for the Skolt Saami, 2022-2026*)
- This presentation stemmed from an article I wrote this spring: *Pahoista, vihaisista ja pikkuisista: koltansaamen paas ja pann sekä pohjoissaamen bahá ja bás [Bad, angry, and tiny: the Skolt Saami words paas and pann and the North Saami words bahá and bás]*

The Skolt Saami language



- Skolt Saami is an indigenous language spoken by about 300 people mostly in the village of Sevettijärvi / Če'vetjäu'rr and other parts of the municipality of Inari, Northern Lapland, Finland. (Also in Russia, Norway, elsewhere in Finland, and in other countries)
- The Skolt Saami from Pechenga region (now part of Russia) resettled in Sevettijärvi and Nellim regions in Finland after World War II
- Two major factors that have influenced the Skolt Saami language during the last century:
 - Shift of the main contact language from Russian to Finnish in the 1940s
 - Beginning language shift to Finnish from the 1970s, sparking language revitalisation efforts



Negative prefixes in Saami languages

- The Western Saami languages, as well as Inari Saami, have negative prefixes borrowed from the neighboring languages
- North Saami **eahpe**dábálaš, Finnish **epä**tavallinen ‘unusual’ from *dábálaš*, *tavallinen* ‘usual, ordinary’
- Pite Saami **u**gullogis, Swedish **o**lydig ‘disobedient’ from *gullogis*, *lydig* ‘obedient’
- In Skolt Saami there has not been such a prefix
- Caritive suffix -te'mes instead, e.g. *vuõigg**te'mes*** ‘indirect’ ← *vuõigg* ‘direct’, cf. *muõr**te'mes*** ‘treeless’ ← *muõrr* ‘tree’



The negative prefix *pann-*

- Words prefixed with *pann-* are used in the modern written language. Examples retrieved from the Saami International Corpus (SIKOR)

News text:

Kue'llšii'l'ji *õhttsažkåå'dd*

fisher.PL.GEN society.GEN

tuärjjõõzz

support.PL

lie

be.3PLnow

ââ'n

tuõđi *vaiggâd*

really difficult.PL

da ***pann-tää'ssärvvsa.***

and PANN-equal.PL

'The social supports for fishermen are currently very difficult and unequal.'

panntää'ssärvvsaž 'inequal' < *tää'ssärvvsaž* 'equal'



The negative prefix *pann-*

- Words prefixed with *pann-* are used in the modern written language. Examples retrieved from the Saami International Corpus (SIKOR)

Administrative text:

<i>Jōs</i>	<i>leäk</i>	<i>pann-aainâs,</i>	<i>raauk</i>	<i>see'st</i>
If	be.2SG	PANN-surely	ask.IMP.2SG	3PL.LOC

ä'sštobddâm-vie'kķ .

expertise-help.ACC

'If you are unsure, ask them for expert help.'

pannaainâs 'unsure' < *aainâs* 'surely, certainly'



Spoken language

- The native Skolt Saami speakers (who have learned the language at home) do not use the prefix *pann-*, as far as I know
- Exception: *panntiõrvâs* 'sick' from *tiõrvâs* 'healthy' (example from an archive recording from 1959)



Son â'te määusat puõ'dī, ja pann'nalla
3SG PCLE back come.PST.3SG and badly

son vâj-škuõ'dī, pann-tiõrvâs jälsti, ja
3SG feel-begin.PST.3SG PANN-healthy live.PST.3SG and

son pâi tõn... puõ3zi.
2SG only PCLE be_sick.PST.3SG

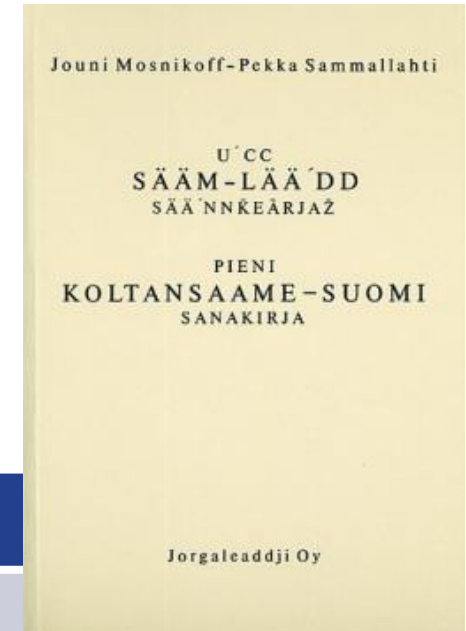
'As he came back, he began to feel ill, and he was sick and just got sicker.'

(KOTUS SKNA 632_1bz 38:19)



The prefix *pann-* in dictionaries

- Moshnikoff & Sammallahti 1988.
U'cc sää'm – lää'dd sää'nnkeârjaž
[Little Skolt Saami – Finnish –
dictionary]:

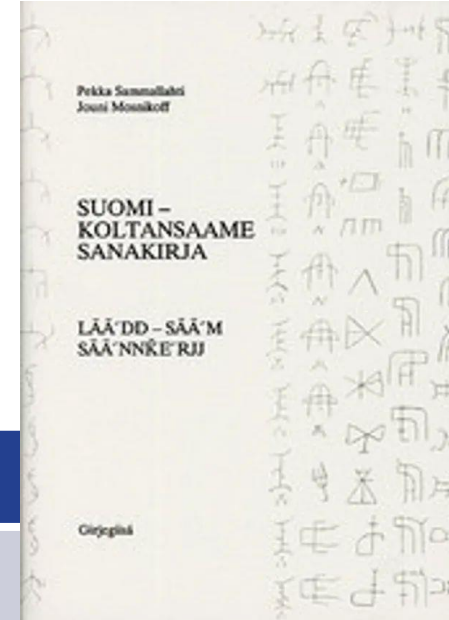


entry	Finnish	English	base word	
<i>pann-</i>	epä-	(neg. prefix)		
<i>panntiõrvâs</i>	kipeä, sairas	'ill, sick'	<i>tiõrvâs</i>	'healthy'
<i>panntiõrvâsvuõtt</i>	sairaus	'sickness'		
<i>pannâskk</i>	epäusko	'disbelief'	<i>âskk</i>	'belief, faith'



The prefix *pann-* in dictionaries

- Sammallahti & Mosnikoff 1991.
Suomi – koltansaame sanakirja
[Finnish – Skolt Saami dictionary]

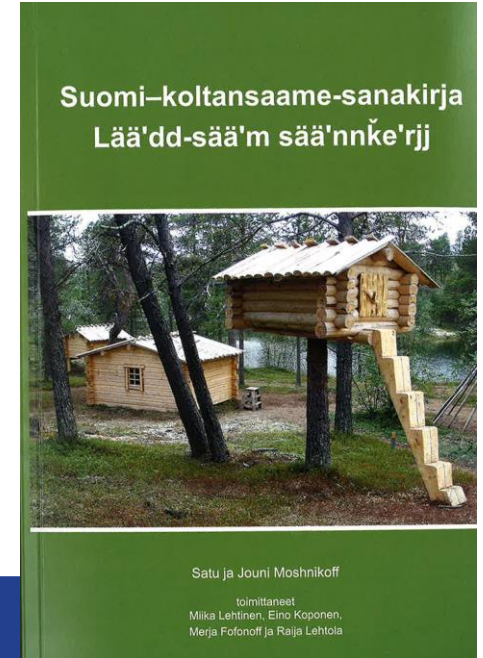


entry	Skolt Saami	English	base word	
<i>epä-</i>	pann-	(neg. prefix)		
<i>epäusko</i>	pannåskk	'disbelief'	åskk	'belief, faith'
BUT				
<i>epäsuora</i>	vuõigte'mes	'indirect'	<i>vuõigg</i>	'direct'
<i>epävirallinen</i>	vee'rjte'mes	'unofficial, informal'	<i>ve'rğğ</i> <i>veerglaž</i>	'office' 'official'
...				



The prefix *pann-* in dictionaries

- Moshnikoff et al. 2020. *Suomi–koltansaame-sanakirja* [Finnish – Skolt Saami dictionary]
- Mostly follows earlier dictionaries, with some additions:



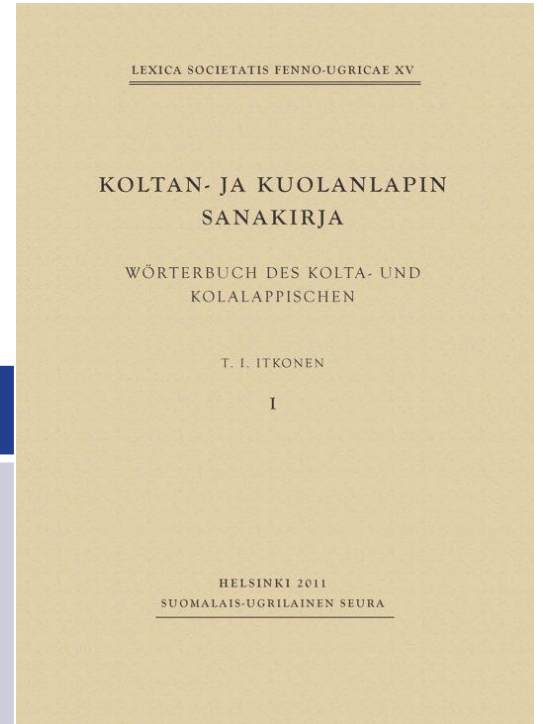
entry	Skolt Saami	English	base word	
<i>epäaito</i>	pannveärlaž	'false'	cf. <i>alggveärlaž</i>	'original'
<i>epämetalli</i>	pannmetall	'nonmetal'	<i>metall</i>	'metal'
<i>epätarkasti</i>	panntärkka	'imprecisely'	<i>tärkka</i>	'precisely'



The original usage of *pann*

- The word *pann* is found in earlier dictionaries, but not the prefix *pann-*
- Itkonen 1958. *Koltan- ja kuolanlapin sanakirja* [Dictionary of Skolt and Kola Lappish]:

entry	Finnish	English	base word	
<i>pann: mii leäk, jiõk ni pann čie'sn vee'rd kiõrd</i>	'mikä olet, kun et tikkapahaisen vertaa kestä!'	'what are you, you can't even endure as much as a tiny woodpecker!'		
<i>pannvââj</i>	'pahoinvoipa, huonovointinen'	'unwell, feeling bad '	<i>vââjjad</i>	'feel (good, bad etc.)'
<i>pannjiõgg</i>	'paholainen'	'devil, evil spirit'	<i>jiõgg</i>	'spirit'
<i>pannšõŋŋ</i>	'paha sää, pyry'	' bad weather'	<i>šõŋŋ</i>	'weather'
<i>pann'nalla</i>	'pahasti, huonosti'	' badly , poorly'	<i>-nalla</i>	'in ... way'





The original usage of *pann*

- The modern dictionaries give the word *pann* the meaning 'tiny' (as in the example 'tiny woodpecker' above)
- These are often derogatory expressions, similarly to Finnish *pahainen* 'tiny, insignificant, poor'



The etymology of *pann*

- The word *pann* is originally a variant of *paa*, *paas* 'bad, evil' (borrowed from Finnic *paha* 'id. '), as is seen in e.g. the words *pannjiõgg* ~ *paasjiõgg* 'evil spirit' (*jiõgg* 'spirit')
- Comparing the information available, I have come to the conclusion that the word *pann* has developed from *paa(s)* in the following way:
 - *paa* 'bad' + *-nalla* 'in ... way' > **paanalla* 'badly, poorly' > (consonant lengthening) **pannalla* > (*pann-* is analyzed as a morpheme of its own) *pann'nalla*
 - *pann* is attached to compounds such as *pannjiõgg* 'evil spirit'
 - *pann* is used in the meaning 'tiny, insignificant, poor' by analogy of Karelian *paha* 'bad; tiny, insignificant, poor' or Finnish *paha* 'bad' and *pahainen* 'tiny, insignificant, poor'



The emergence of the prefix *pann-*

- As mentioned earlier, the negative prefix *pann-* is not widely used in spoken language
- The modern usage in written language is probably due to the dictionaries by Sammallahti and Moshnikoff (1988 and 1991)
- Even the dictionaries themselves contain few examples of words with this prefix, mainly the prefix itself as corresponding to the Finnish negative prefix *epä-*



The emergence of the prefix *pann-*

- Why has the negative prefix been included in the dictionaries of the 1980s and 1990s?
- Suggestion:
 - The expression *pann'nalla vââjjad* [badly feel] 'feel ill' gave rise to the adverb *pannvââj* 'unwell'.
 - This perhaps gave the word / prefix *pann-* the connotation of feeling ill, so it was used to form the word *pann-tiõrvâs* [bad-healthy] 'sick'
 - This single word might be the source of analyzing *pann-* as a negative prefix



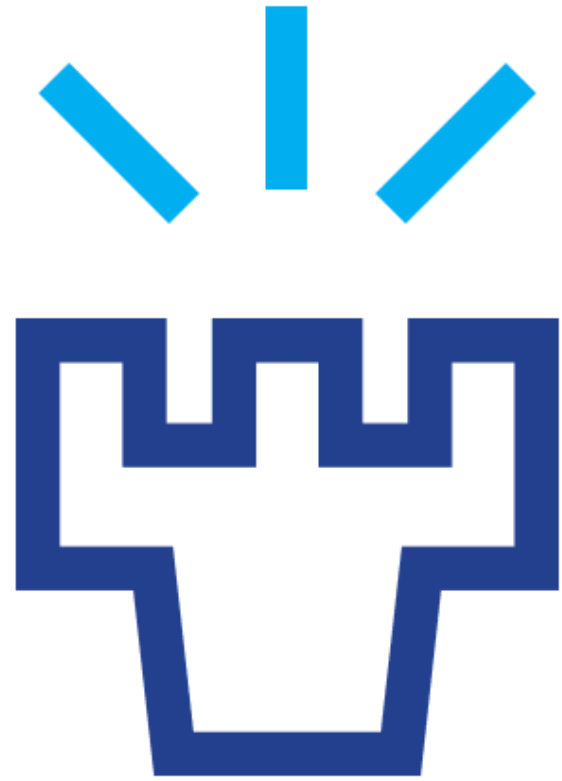
Conclusion

- Despite being mentioned in modern dictionaries and, probably based on these, used in the modern written language, the negative prefix *pann-* seems not to have been widely accepted in the speaker community
- There has perhaps been a wish to translate the Finnish negative prefix *epä-* with a prefix, which may have led to including the negative prefix in the dictionaries
- The word *pann* means 'bad' (in compounds) and 'tiny, insignificant, poor', and adopting it as a negative prefix may originate from a single word, *panntiõrvâs* 'sick' < *tiõrvâs* 'healthy'



References

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